




# Local and institutional challenges in the establishment of GIs in Western Balkans countries

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**SEEDEV**



QUALITY FOOD PRODUCTS LINKED TO GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN AND TRADITIONS IN SOUTH AND EASTERN EUROPE



## 5 main dimensions

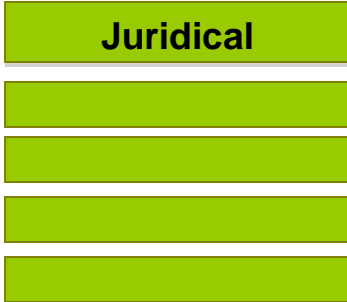
- Juridical
- Organisational
- Technical
- Control and certification
- Marketing and Promotion

**BUT** ... will focus mostly on implication on producers and value chains



## Legal protection of the names

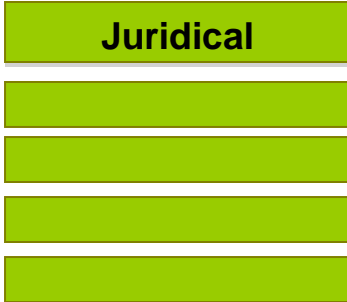
- Former Yugoslavia countries have a legislation enabling GI-Registration.
- Albania is the only country of the WBC that does not have any legal provision for GI protection
- WBC countries are in EU accession process and legal reforms are made on the basis of European regulations

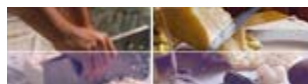




## International agreements

- All WBC are signatories of the Lisbon Agreement
- Albania and Croatia are member of WTO. Others are negotiating their membership (TRIPS Agreement)





## Product representation

Applications in most of the countries can be submitted by:

– Producers groups

– Individuals

⇒ *Monopoly*

⇒ *Exclusion*

– State administrative body, local administrative body and chambers

⇒ *Facilitate the number of initiatives and increase the number of registered products*

⇒ *Lack of mobilisation*

⇒ *non use of the GI and frozen GIs*

*Croatia is the only non-EU country of the region that specifies that submissions shall be made by producer groups only*

**Organisational**



## ***Governance structures***

### ***– Organisations weaknesses***

- Absence of inter-professional association (producers, processors, traders)
- *Lack of collective actions due to lack of trust (collective sounds to much like collectivism)*
- Lack of value chain vertical coordination





## Decision-making process

- Producers are often marginalised
  - Decisions are made by academic and State institutions (definition of the production area and description of the process and the products)
  - The absence of producer association prevents producers to reach compromises
- *Lack of opposition procedures*
  - *The competent authority(ies) and the academic are supposed are the guarantors of the system equity*

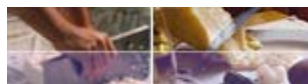
Organisational



## Enforcement of decisions

- Low level of delegation of competences to producers for the quality control
- Authorities are in charge of the enforcement of decisions (acceptance is damaged)
- The laws and regulations are often vague on enforcement measures
- Lack of judges awareness on GIs
  - Sirogojno

Organisational



## Definition of the process and the product

Most of the code of practices are defined by researchers and authorities, without facilitation among stakeholders:

- *Variability of the product is often not taken into account*
- *“Scientific” and technocratic approach justified by the belief of only one authentic product*

***⇒ Possible negative economic effects due to exclusion of small-scale producers or dynamic processors***

Technical



**Definition of the process and the product requires time to negotiate among value chain stakeholders.**



This process:

- enables the emergence of a common vision
- guarantees the respect of the code of practice



## Procedures for control and certification

- *The control focuses mainly on the registration procedure and the authorisation of new users*
- *No clear procedures of control*
- *Main gaps in the control:*
  - *no handbook*
  - *no traceability system i.e. no control at farms levels*
  - *no sensorial analysis*





## Bodies for control and certification

- *In many countries bodies are selected on an ad'hoc basis (no clear criteria and absence of norms EN or ISO)*
- *The control/certification bodies play a role of advice and support (conflict of interest)*

*Competent staff in many relevant field but lack of system (regulations and institutions)*



# Accreditation

*Need for accreditation bodies to be recognised by the European Co-operation for Accreditation*

- *FYR of Macedonia, Croatia and Slovenia are members of the ECA*
- *Some countries agencies are recognised for laboratory certification (EN 45003)*
- *None, but Slovenia, can accredit according to EN 45011*

Certification




# Certification

–High investment to establish certification bodies (capacity building, institutional efforts)

–Public vs. Private:

- *Slovenia has one private certification body, but very few certified products because of inadequate high costs for small production volumes*
- *State based certification might be more affordable for producers, but costly for the tax payers*





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# Joint product strategy

## Challenges

- *Strengthening producer associations for collective actions in particular in the field of promotion*
- *Co-existence of brand and GI*
- *Mobilise producers to access international donor funds (participation to fair, publication of promotion material)*
  - *Example of Bermet or Livno*



Promotion



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## Consumers

- *Growing demand of traditional products on domestic urban market and exports*
- *Raise of awareness of consumer of what GI means (code of practice, product specificity)*
- *Increase visibility of GIs thank to national logo, (Slovenia has one)*



Promotion



## Conclusion

### *Advantages*

High potential for GIs in the South-Eastern European countries

Long tradition of GIs protection system

Common Yugoslav legacy

⇒ *possibility to avoid repeating the same mistakes*

### *Challenges*

Need of legislation harmonisation

Collective need to delegate competences to producers

Need to link protection with promotion and rural development policies

**Conclusion**